EXHIBIT D

My Email To New York Times's Ryan Mac: A New Accountability Project

It's time for the tech community to work alongside a responsible press.
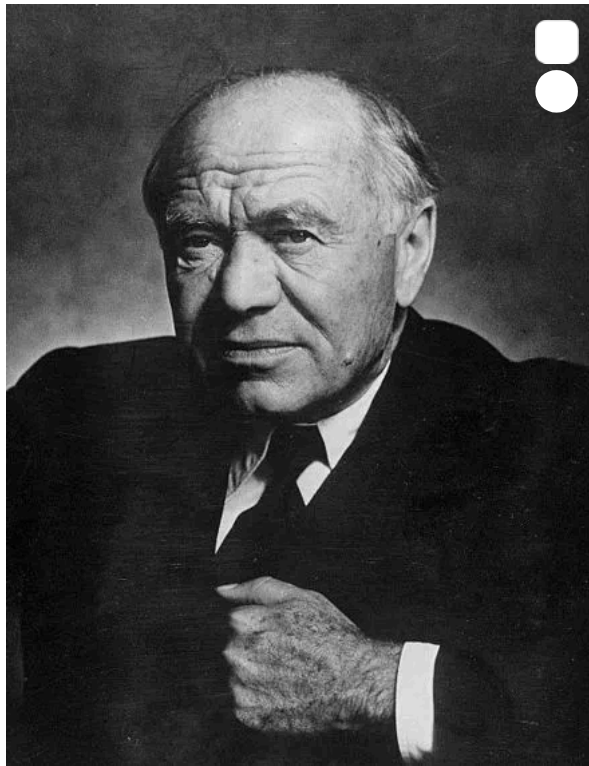
CHARLES JOHNSON
OCT 29, 2021

♡ 3   ◯   Share

Power without responsibility: the prerogative of the harlot throughout the ages. — Rudyard Kipling, summing up Lord Beaverbrook's political standpoint as a newspaper editor; Stanley Baldwin, Kipling's cousin, subsequently obtained permission to use the phrase in a speech, 18 March 1931, quoted in *Kipling Journal* vol. 38, no. 180, December 1971
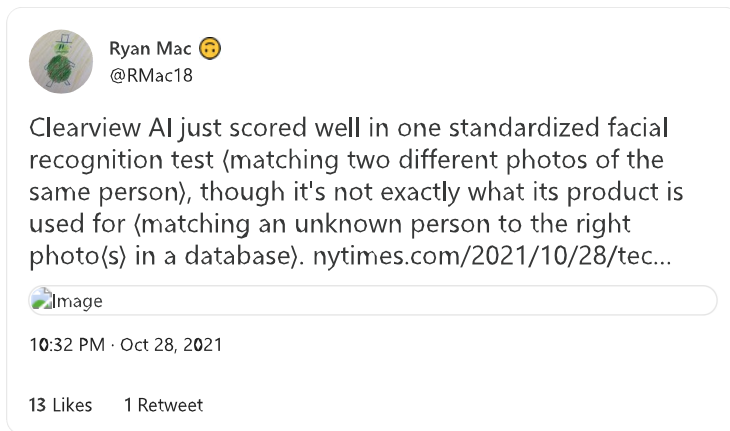
You hear often of a sort of war between the tech community and journalism writ large. I'm not of this view. We need a robust journalistic community checking the errors of the tech world and we need this now more than ever but a free press is not a press free from criticism or complaint. Conflicts of interest must be disclosed and responsible journalism has rules, after all. This is what separates it from misinformation. I do not agree with Balaji Srinavasan who favors boycotting journalists but I do believe in cultivating responsible journalists. They are so desperately needed for our moment, as the Facebook Papers makes clear.

And before you harp on me about Gawker, recall that Gawker needed to go for being a front for Russian intelligence in much the same way that the leadership of the SPLC had to go for being a front for the Israelis. Gawker was under FBI investigation long before Peter and I showed up and one of its owners was later sanctioned by the US government.

Dear Ryan Mac,

1

This is a public email between us. You can feel free to share it, as I will, with the public. In fact I may well put it up on Substack where they still have unfettered conversations. Or so I'm told.

I'm proud of you for grudgingly and publicly posting this link after I privately hounded you.

Ryan Mac 🙃
@RMac18

Clearview AI just scored well in one standardized facial recognition test (matching two different photos of the same person), though it's not exactly what its product is used for (matching an unknown person to the right photo(s) in a database). nytimes.com/2021/10/28/tec...

Image

10:32 PM · Oct 28, 2021

13 Likes   1 Retweet

Discover more from Charles Jol Thoughts and Adventure
A few thoughts here and there
Over 2,000 subscribers

Type your email...

Subscribe

Continue reading   >

Sign in

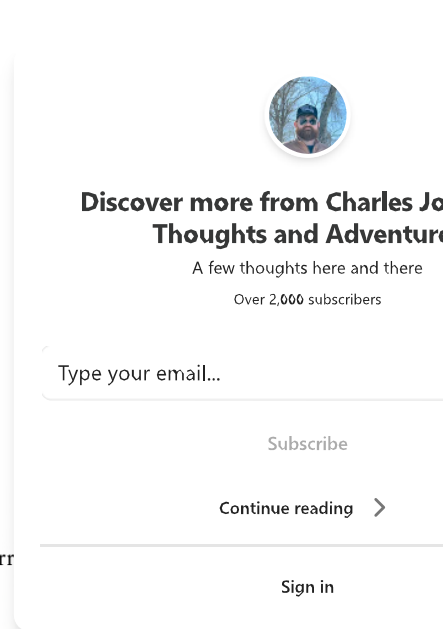Here's the press release so you can further update your priors.

It must have been tough to admit you messed up in your early coverage of Clearview. (I'm sorr but I can't link to BuzzFeed as it's a foreign actor.)

But those failures can't continue now that you are working for the New York Times on the "tech accountability" project. A sincere congratulations on moving on up in the world but the loosey goosey way you got to the Times leaves a lot to be desired, especially your reliance on foreign sources.
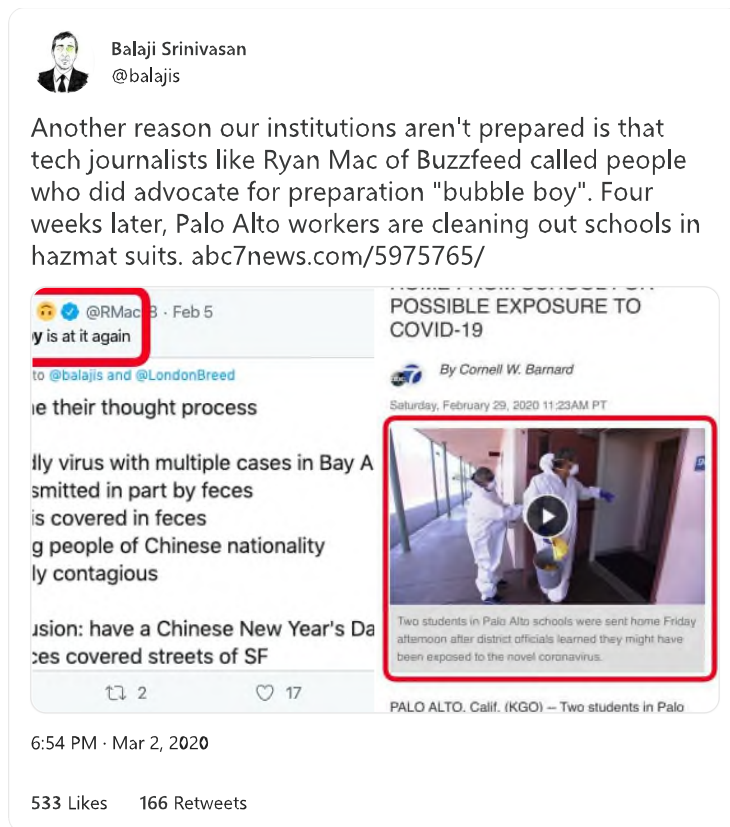
Never fear! I am part of the accountability project, too, but it's for you. It's a self appointed role, just as yours is, who will watch the watchers and all that but it's one I take on with great relish. You should read David Brin's *The Transparent Society*. He's right. Criticism is the only known antidote to error. COKATE!

David Brin on Writers and Criticism

I expect you to criticize me but you have to bring your A-Game and so far, you've been lacking. Sad!

2

It's a good start admitting you were wrong but it's not accurate to say Clearview placed "well" in a recent test of its products. You like to retcon, I know. You suggested that covid was just the flu and you pilloried people who were worried about it. (In fairness I thought the covid stuff was a bit overstated too. I may well have been wrong. I guess we will see!)

Clearview placed no. 1 in America in a key NIST test of the company's technology, technology you said repeatedly didn't work.

You staked your professional reputation on this very point both at BuzzFeed, on Twitter, and now at the New York Times. They haven't let you write about Clearview for the Times because your colleague Kashmir was so ahead of the story but you still tweet about the company as if anything worthwhile to say.

The company, which I cofounded — there's that disclosure! — achieved this amazing feat despite your participation in a foreign government supported denigration campaign against me and the company. It did this well despite raising way less money than its foreign funded competitors, SenseTime (Chinese), NTech labs (Russian), and AnyVision (Israeli).

Let me help you on your apology to Hoan Ton-That, Clearview's brilliant but hapless CEO, and to your readers. It should begin as follows:

> Clearview.AI, a company I variously said didn't work but was also super evil, is the most successful facial recognition company in America, according to an independent government assessment. I assumed the public was too stupid to catch that inherent oxymoron but I was wrong. The public does understand the threats we face and how facial recognition can be used to safeguard us from January 6th to the riots of the past summer. That citizen militia of keyboard warrior sedition hunters were in keeping with the greatest of American traditions. Too bad they used a foreign company PimEyes rather than Clearview to catch all the

3

baddies...and built a database of our mentally ill for the Russians to use later on. By repeatedly participating in a denigration campaign against Clearview, I helped make that happen and make America less safe. To my fellow Americans I'm sorry.

The company was started by an unlikely combination of Americans — a flamboyant immigrant living on couches, an overlooked Jewish sexagenarian who served in the NY city government, and a prep-school scholarship winning scion of intelligence and military officers who has helped bust some of the largest spying and foreign influence operations. Together they built the most successful facial recognition technology without a penny of venture capital money from Silicon Valley, despite that very same venture capital industry funding its Chinese and Israeli government backed competitors.

As the child of immigrants I was envious of the successes of a Vietnamese-Australian naturalized American citizen Hoan Ton-That. Rather than tell that story I made him into a villain. Here was a college dropout. I went to Stanford, damnit! What would Mom think if she knew about this other Vietnamese kid just killing it?

I foolishly participated in a hack and leak operation organized by a foreign government (UAE with an Israeli assist) and began harassing law enforcement around the world for daring to use facial recognition to identify rioters along with my colleagues who have also moved on. Caroline Haskins now works for German-owned Business Insider, a company very, very close to the Israelis. Why I even built a search engine of Clearview's hacked data, which others have gone to jail for doing. This is journalism privilege and I will do my best moving forward not to take advantage of it.

I did all this because I ideologically oppose facial recognition, which I find creepy, and because well, I'm a liberal arts major, and I didn't understand how I was being used by foreign players to wound a key weapons system developed by Americans for Americans and our allies.

Rather than admit the obvious that Mr. Johnson has always served his country in a variety of roles — I mean come on! He visited Assange for the US government — I smeared him as a Holocaust denier and a racist. I can only take comfort in the fact that I was not alone in that though I apologize to Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Johnson has sued my former publication of BuzzFeed and Huffington Post and seems to be winning each step of the lawsuit in federal court — just as he did when he took on Gawker. I appreciate him not suing me but he is quite merciful.

As a new reporter for the New York Times, I promise to follow the actual standards of my profession and to develop professional integrity I have hitherto lacked. I will draw my inspiration from the best of the Times rather than its slave owning proprietors, be they Carlos Slim or the Suzlberger family. I will print the news that's fit to print and in the public interest rather than advance my own selfish agenda.

—Ryan

————————————

Something like that would go along way but variations are acceptable! I'm happy to edit it if you need help.

In the future accept more notes from concerned readers. We are both a part of sustaining our civilization — we need good journalists but we also need journalists who back America, and

4

want her to be number one in facial recognition, in hypersonic missiles, in genetics, in everything really.

I understand you are in LA. Happy to educate you anytime you wish. I'll even pick up the tab.

You need to come with open eyes and good faith, though. I'll bring the same.

All the best,

Charles

P.S. I highly recommend reading the poem "If" by Kipling. Here's Michael Caine's rendition. I especially like the line — "if you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools."

He's talking about you, Ryan!

IF, Rudyard Kipling's poem, recited by Sir Michael Caine

Comments

Write a comment...

5